

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 IO-14 SSM-05 ISO-00 PA-02
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DRAFTED BY NEA/P:WBHARRIS:DP
APPROVED BY NEA/P:REUNDELAND
PA/PRESS - MR. CARTER
H - MR. FLATEN
SSM - MR. MC ANDREW
NEA/IAI - MR. KORN
NEA/ARN - MR. DRAPER
NEA/EGY - MR. MARTHINSEN
NEA/ARP - MR. TWINAM

-----055201 252354Z /23

O 252252Z JUL 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USMISSION SINAI
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
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USMISSION USNATO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE
SECDEF WASHDC 0000
JCS WASHDC 0000
CIA WASHDC 0000
USICA WASHDC
NSC WASHDC 0000
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS POUCH

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CINCEUR FOR POLAD; TEL AVIV FOR PAO, DELIVER BY 9 A.M.

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - JULY 25, 1978

1. FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS
FROM DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING FOR JULY 25. FYI ONLY,
OFFICER PRESENT TODAY WAS HODDING CARTER.

Q. THERE IS THE REPORT IN THE FBIS QUOTING A SAUDI
ARABIAN NEWSPAPER AS SAYING THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS
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SENT A MESSAGE TO ASSAD, SAYING: "GET THE SYRIAN TROOPS
OUT OF LEBANON OR WE ARE GOING TO LET THE ISRAELIS TAKE
9;ER THE WHOLE COASTAL AREA OF LEBANON FROM TYRE TO TRIPOLI."
AND THAT THE SYRIANS THEN SENT THE MESSAGE TO MOSCOW ASKING

IN EFFECT: "HOW, PLEASE?" WILL YOU COMMENT?

A. I DON'T ORDINARILY COMMENT ON THAT KIND OF A STORY --
BUT I DENY IT. I MEAN, I KNOW OF NO SUCH THING.

Q. I GATHERED YOU WERE ASKED YESTERDAY FOR A REACTION TO
PRIME MINISTER DAYAN'S STATEMENT ABOUT DISCUSSING SOVEREIGNTY
OVER THE WEST BANK AT THE END OF FIVE YEARS. DID YOU EVER
GET AN ANSWER ON THAT?

A. IT OUGHT TO BE POSTED. YES, I THOUGHT THIS WAS GOING
TO BE THE ANSWER. IT WAS: WHILE WE ARE NOW ENGAGED IN
DISCUSSIONS WITH ISRAELI AND EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENTS ON THE
FOREIGN MINISTER LEVEL, MEETING IN EARLY AUGUST, WE WOULD
NOT BELIEVE IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO COMMENT ON OR CHARACTER-
IZE SUCH STATEMENTS BY ISRAELI OR EGYPTIAN LEADERS. NOW,
THAT'S THE LONG WAY OF SAYING, "NO COMMENT."

Q. I RECALL, THOUGH, THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAS SAID IN THE PAST THAT ISRAEL HAD NOT YET GIVEN A SATISFACTORY RESPONSE TO THE QUESTIONS PUT TO IT AS TO WHAT WOULD BE THE FUTURE OF THAT AREA AFTER FIVE YEARS. I CAN INFER FROM THIS, THEN, THAT YOU REGARD THE WILLINGNESS TO DISCUSS SOVEREIGNTY AT THE END OF FIVE YEARS AS UNSATISFACTORY.

A. NO, I WOULDN'T INFER THAT. I MEAN, YOU CAN INFER WHAT YOU WISH. I AM SIMPLY NOT IMPLYING THAT. WHAT I WOULD ONLY POINT OUT TO YOU IS THAT SINCE WE HAVE JUST HAD SEVERAL DAYS IN WHICH BOTH PARTIES SAT DOWN TOGETHER AND TALKED, AND SINCE WE ANTICIPATE HAVING THE CONTINUED TALKS

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DIRECTLY, IN A COUPLE OF WEEKS, I THINK THAT IT IS BOTH UNTIMELY, AND UNNECESSARY AND UNWISE FOR US TO TRY TO CHARACTERIZE THE PARTIES' POSITIONS SINCE THEY WILL BE TALKING DIRECTLY TO EACH OTHER.

Q. WELL, THE SECRETARY OF STATE DID CHARACTERIZE THE PARTIES POSITION AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE IN LEEDS WHEN HE SAID THAT THE ANSWERS AT THE END OF FIVE YEARS HAVE NOT BEEN SATISFACTORY. WE NOW FIND OUT THAT ONE OF THESE ANSWERS WAS A WILLINGNESS TO DISCUSS SOVEREIGNTY AFTER FIVE YEARS. I DON'T SEE HOW YOU CAN SUCCESSFULLY AVOID COMMENT ON THAT.

A. I DON'T HAVE ANY FURTHER COMMENT. I AM SORRY.

Q. YOU DID COMMENT WHEN THE ISRAELI REPLIES TO THE TWO QUESTIONS CAME BACK A FEW WEEKS AGO. YOU FELT IT WAS REGRETABLE AND DISAPPOINTING. APPARENTLY WHAT THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID YESTERDAY IS A MODIFICATION OF THOSE ANSWERS. ARE THEY STILL IN THE STATUS OF REGRETABLE OR DISAPPOINTING?

A. I AM STUCK WITH NO COMMENT ON IT.

Q. COULD YOU MAKE ANOTHER ATTEMPT TO GET SOME COMMENT?

A. THE ONLY ANSWER YOU ARE GOING TO GET IS WHAT I JUST GAVE YOU. INSOFAR AS I CAN FORESEE WE ARE NOT GOING TO BE COMMENTING ON THE PUBLIC POSITIONS THAT ARE TAKEN BY EITHER SIDE BETWEEN NOW AND THE RESUMPTION OF THE NEGOTIATION BETWEEN THE PARTIES.

Q. WHEREAS THE DEPARTMENT AND THE PRESIDENT AT A NEWS

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CONFERENCE SEVERAL WEEKS AGO FELT FREE TO COMMENT WE NOW
FEEL THAT THE DIPLOMATIC SITUATION IS SUCH THAT WE NO
LONGER WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT?

A. I THINK YOU WOULD HAVE TO DRAW ANY CONCLUSION YOU
WANT TO. I AM JUST TELLING YOU WHAT THE STATE OF PLAY IS.

Q. AND WHEN WE ARE UNHAPPY WITH THEIR POSITION WE SAY SO,

BUT WHEN MAYBE THEIR POSITION CHANGES AND WE SHOULD BE A

LITTLE HAPPIER WITH IT WE DON'T GIVE THEM PUBLIC CREDIT FOR
IT?

A. I AM NOT GOING TO COMMENT ON THAT. WE JUST ARE NOT IN
A POSITION TO COMMENT ON IT RIGHT NOW.

Q. CAN YOU TELL US SOMETHING ABOUT THE PROGRESS AMBASSADOR
ATHERTON IS MAKING IN THE MIDDLE EAST?

A. NO. I SAW A FBIS REPORT FOLLOWING HIS MEETING WITH
KING HUSSEIN. I DON'T HAVE ANY PROGRESS REPORT TO OFFER
YOU. YOU KNOW HE GOES NEXT, IF HE HASN'T ALREADY GONE, TO
JERUSALEM.

Q. YES, BUT WHAT IS HE DOING NOW, WHAT IS HE TALKING
ABOUT?

A. AMONG OTHER THINGS, WHAT HE WILL BE TALKING ABOUT IS
THE PRECISE FORMULATION OF THE RESPONSE BY THE VARIOUS
GOVERNMENTS TO WHAT WAS BROUGHT BACK FROM LEEDS, A FURTHER
DEFINITION OF HOW THEY SEE THE NEXT STEP BEING TAKEN.
THESE ARE MATTERS WHICH HE HAS DONE BEFORE. I MEAN THESE
ARE COURSES HE HAS ADOPTED BEFORE AND HIS IS ADOPTING NOW.

HE ALSO INTENDS TO BE IN THE AREA FOR CONSULTATION AND ANY
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OTHER ASSISTANCE HE CAN GIVE PRIOR TO THE SECRETARY COMING
OUT THERE FOR HIS OWN CONSULTATION AND THE MEETING WHICH WE
EXPECT TO TAKE PLACE BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES.

Q. IS HE TRYING TO FORMULATE OR TO GET A FORMULA OF THE
DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES?

A. OUR GENERAL THRUST IS BOTH SPECIFIC AND GENERAL ON THIS AND THAT ANYTHING THAT WE ARE DOING IS ALWAYS KEEP-
ING IN MIND OUR DESIRE TO FIND SOME WAY TO DEAL WITH THE
SITUATION ON THE GROUND, THE SPECIFIC QUESTIONS OF THE
WEST BANK AND GAZA AND ALSO SOME WAY, WHILE WE ARE DOING
THAT, TO ALSO ADVANCE THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES.

BUT I CAN'T BE VERY PRECISE ABOUT EXACTLY UHAT ROY IS DOING
AT EACH STOP. THE OVERALL POINT OF HIS MISSION IS WHAT
I JUST SAID.

Q. YOU KEEP GOING BACK TO LEEDS. AT LEEDS DID BOTH SIDES
EXCHANGE PROPOSALS OR IDEAS FOR THE OTHER'S CONSIDERATION?
WE WERE GIVEN IT WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE TWO PLANS BEING
DISCUSSED IN VERY, VERY GREAT DETAIL.

A. THAT IS STILL THE ONLY WAY I CAN DEFINE WHAT I SAW
HAPPENING.

Q. IT WAS NOT THAT ONE SIDE GAVE THE OTHER SOME NEW FOR-
MULATIONS OR IDEAS FOR THE OTHER'S CONSIDERATION. THE
SECRETARY HAS SAID THAT THEY HAVE TO MULL OVER WHAT THEY
HEARD THERE. IS IT JUST THE DETAIL ITSELF OR OTHER IDEAS
OR WHAT?

A. LET ME GIVE YOU A FOR INSTANCE. ONE SIDE MIGHT SAY TO
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THE OTHER WHAT IF WE OFFERED TO SLICE THE APPLE IN FOUR
QUARTERS INSTEAD OF IN THIRDS, WHAT WOULD YOU THINK ABOUT
THAT? WE WOULD SAY, WELL, OUR INITIAL REACTION IS WE
DON'T THINK VERY MUCH OF IT, BUT WE WILL SEE WHAT WE THINK
ABOUT IT AND WE WILL TELL YOU LATER. IT WAS THAT KIND OF
THING HAPPENED, WHICH MIGHT NOT HAVE BEEN THE SAME AS
PUTTING A PAPER ON THE TABLE AND SAYING HERE IS A NEW
SET OF PROPOSALS WE ARE OFFER,NG YOU IN A FORMAL WAY. BUT
THERE WAS A GREAT DEAL OF EXPLORATION THE WAY I JUST SAID.

Q. WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT REPORTS THAT THE UNITED
STATES IS SENDING A MILITARY AID MISSION TO NORTH YEMEN?

A. I AM GOING TO HAVE TO TAKE THAT QUESTION.

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